HOW TO START A BLOG WITH WORDPRESS

There are lots of free blogging platforms available out there, but WordPress still trumps them all in terms of breadth of features, support and a dedicated base of developers building and maintaining free and paid plugins to enhance its functionality.

If you are someone with no technical knowledge whatsoever and you are interested in starting a blog, then WordPress is the best option available to you.

I wrote this series to share the knowledge I gained while conducting my research to set up this site and I have broken down the process into a series of articles. The whole process of installing WordPress will take less down five minutes, the trick is usually knowing how to set it up properly and how to attract and maintain a dedicated audience.

The topics in this series deal with the basics of setting up WordPress, tools every blogger will need and ways you can monetize your blog.

THE TOPICS IN THE SERIES:

CHOOSE A TOPIC AND A WEB HOSTING PLATFORM

INSTALL WORDPRESS

UNDERSTAND THE WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

SET UP WORDPRESS

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FIRST STEPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING A BLOG

There are a number of steps you must consider before you install and launch WordPress. You must choose a niche, choose a domain name and choose a WebHost. The first step you must take is to choose a topic for your blog. It's likely you already have a topic you want to blog about especially if you are starting a blog mainly as an avenue to promote your business.

When choosing a topic, you must consider the type of audience you want for your blog, the topic(s) that will interest them, and your breadth of knowledge on those

topics. You must also ask yourself if you can continue to consistently generate articles on that topic.

After evaluating all the factors listed in the preceding paragraph, you must then consider the type of blog you want to start. There are several types of blogs you can start, some of which are:

- **NICHE EXPERT/THOUGHT LEADER**- if you have command of your field or a particular business or topic, you can start a blog and present yourself as an expert in the field. An example of a thought leader is NEIL PATEL, he is considered to be one of the leading experts in content marketing today and he attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to his blogs every month.

- **NEWS BLOG**- you can start a blog that focuses on in-depth articles on the trending news in any niche. You can start an entertainment news blog, a sports news blog or even a business news blog. You can check out NAIRAMETRICS, it is an example of a good news blog.

- **INSPIRATIONAL BLOG**- if you are good at motivating people, you can start an inspirational blog. You must focus on a particular issue that you can be known for. See CHIDINMA INSPIRATIONS, it is a good example of an inspirational blog.

- **PERSONAL BLOG**- you can also start a personal blog for the fun of it or to promote your professional career.

- **BUSINESS BLOG**: in a few years' time, it will become vital for every small business to have a website and a blog. The epileptic electric supply has so far meant an online presence is still not crucial to the survival of your

business. But soon if you want to compete effectively, you must develop an online presence with a blog that serves as a marketing avenue for your business.

- **NICHE BLOG**- you can start a blog that will be a hub in your industry or niche. Some blogs like 360nobs, ogbongeblog, problogger.net, and others are all examples of niche blogs that have established themselves in their niches.

The next step after you have chosen a topic and a blog type is to choose a domain name. Your domain name is the unique name that is used to identify your website. Each website as its own domain name and no two websites have the same domain name. For example, the domain name for this site is smallbizventure.com.

The domain name of your site is the most important factor in the identity of your site, and as such you must put a lot of thought into the process of choosing a domain name for your site. Some of the factors you must consider are:

- It must be easy to pronounce, unique, easy to remember, and easy to type.

- it could include keywords that are commonly used to search for topics in your niche

- it must be pronounceable

- you should avoid using numbers and hyphens

- Make sure you use the right domain name extension. Extensions like; .com, .net, .org, .co, all apply to different types of sites. .com will be adequate for most blogs.

- And perhaps most importantly, you must ensure your domain name cannot be confused with that of another blog or company.

You have chosen a topic and a domain name, now you must choose a web hosting company. When you download your WordPress software from wordpress.org, you must upload it to a server where it will be hosted. Webhosting companies provide space on their servers for you to use in exchange for periodical payments on your part. Webhosting plans are generally cheap and affordable due to the competition between providers so you are spoilt for choices.

There are a large number of web hosting companies you can choose from, but you must also consider some factors and the peculiar needs of your site before you choose a web hosting provider. The first factor you must consider is the type of web hosting that will be suitable for your needs.

 there are four (4) major types of web hosting options: free hosting, shared hosting, dedicated hosting, ad cloud hosting.

FREE HOSTING- this is when the hosting provider offers hosting services for free. This type of hosting service usually comes with lots of restrictions in the bandwidth you can use, what you can do with your site and even restrictions on the level of functionality you can add to your site. However, if you are just starting

or all you want is a simple site, then you can use **wordpress.com, google sites**, or **angelfire** to host your site for free.

SHARED HOSTING- this is the most popular type of hosting service and it used by the vast majority of blogs, including this blog. This is when a Webhosting company hosts multiple websites on their servers and provide the same package of services for its customers. If you plan to start a blog for your small business or any other type of blog, provided yours is not a big company or app that will attract millions of traffic then shared hosting is adequate for your needs.

DEDICATED HOSTING- this is for government organizations, large companies, and big websites. Dedicated hosting is when a server is dedicated to the use of a single organization. This is usually more costly than shared hosting but it offers some advantages which include: Cost savings (the company will not bear the cost of maintenance, customization options, guaranteed uptime, and dedicated support.

CLOUD HOSTING- cloud hosting is a more recent type of hosting service that promises to become the standard in the future. the way cloud hosting works is similar to shared hosting, the difference is that cloud hosting spreads the resources required to maintain your site over multiple servers, so the risk of downtime and bandwidth issues are lower. Cloud hosting is suitable for business with large sites, e-commerce sites and those in need of larger bandwidth plans than those offered in shared hosting plans.

The next step is to choose a hosting provider. There are some factors you must consider when choosing a hosting provider and when choosing the right hosting plans for your needs. Some of which are:

- does the WebHost support WordPress: the WebHost must support WordPress and preferably offer one-click WordPress installation

- UPTIME- a good WebHost must guarantee 99.9% uptime

- SUPPORT- the WebHost must offer online support, 24hours phone support, and documentation to guide you in the installation process.

- EMAIL HOSTING- email hosting must be included in every plan

- E-COMMERCE SUPPORT: if you are trying to create an e-commerce site with WordPress then make enquires to ensure your WebHost supports the use of e-commerce plugins

- SCALABILITY- everyone wants their blog to grow and attract more traffic, a major event may attract huge traffic to your site and drain your bandwidth, your hosting provider must accommodate the possibility to scale your hosting plan when necessary.

- THE HOSTING PLANS- different Webhosting providers offer different hosting plans. In choosing one that is right for you - you must consider your financial resources, the size of your blog, the volume of traffic you are expecting and periodic payments (monthly/annually).

SOME HOSTING PROVIDERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER:

WHOGOHOST- this is one of the best Webhosting companies in Nigeria. They offer the full range of hosting services available (domain registration, google apps integration, shared hosting, dedicated hosting and cloud hosting). WHOGOHOST also offers monthly plans and annual plans, the flexible hosting plans means there is something for you whatever your unique needs may be. It also offers reseller services.

SYSKAY SYSTEMS: this Nigerian hosting provider offers a standard hosting plan, business hosting plan, and advanced hosting plan, they do not offer monthly plans but each plan category offers more bandwidth and add-ons than comparable plans offered by competitors.

REGISTERAM- another Nigerian hosting provider, it also offers domain name registration and shared hosting in annual plans.

BLUEHOST- this provider ticks all the boxes- affordable hosting plans, incredible support, WordPress support, one-click installation, add-on services, money-back guarantee, google apps integration, and others. Bluehost is one of the best hosting providers you can find out there.

GODADDY- this hosting provider is very popular among businesses and it is one of the most recognizable web hosting names. The company as grown at a rapid rate since it started and it offers everything you need from your hosting provider and more. It also offers the cheapest hosting plans out there.

HOSTGATOR: this award-winning hosting provider already serves more than five million customers and it's known for its reliable customer service that has made it popular among small business owners.

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HOW TO INSTALL WORDPRESS WITH FANTASTICO

WordPress is a free content management software (blogging platform) that is used by millions of websites in the world today. It is simple to use and manage and it is packed with numerous plugins that give you the ability to extend the basic functionality of your website.

There are two types of WordPress software; wordpress.com and wordpress.org. Wordpress.com is free and the hosting is also free. Wordpress.org is free but you must host the software yourself or use a web hosting provider.

Wordpress.com is free and it offers all the basic functionality you need but it is advisable you use wordpress.org and pay for your own hosting because of the limitations and the unprofessional look of sites that rely on free hosting.

There are several ways you can install your site, you can install your site manually or you can use a straightforward route using software like- fantastico and softaculous and others. This article will only address how to install WordPress with fantastico.

HOW TO INSTALL WORDPRESS USING FANTASTICO

When you pay for web hosting and your payment is confirmed, your hosting provider will send you details on your domain name, the link to your admin page with the hosting company and the link to your Cpanel dashboard.

INSERT IMAGE

To install WordPress using fantastico, follow the steps below:

- login to your Cpanel dashboard

- scroll down to the SOFTWARE AND SERVICES SECTION(see the image above)

- click on the fantastico icon

INSERT IMAGE

- On the screen, you see a list of web applications on your left, click on BLOGS, and then click on WORDPRESS among your options.

- when you click on WordPress, you will be shown a WordPress page along with the install button

- click on install WordPress to continue

- then, you have to fill some installation settings

INSERT IMAGE

- Provide the necessary details. NOTE: unless you want to install WordPress in a sub-directory, leave the field empty.

- click the SUBMIT button to continue

- fantastico will install WordPress for you and after it as finished installing you will see a success message.

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A BREAKDOWN OF THE WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

The WordPress dashboard is the first page you will see when you log in to your WordPress admin page. It is your administrative panel and the backend of your site. The dashboard is where you choose and set up your theme, create pages, install plugins, create posts, and manage comments, users and much more.

If you are reading through this series, then you may be wondering how you can find your WordPress admin page. Once you secure a web hosting plan and you have installed WordPress manually or through one-click installation, then to

install WordPress, all you need to do is to add /wp-admin to your domain. That is, type (mysite.com/wp-admin) in your browser and it will lead you to your login page.

Fill in the username and password you set up when you were installing WordPress and you will be logged in to your admin page.

INSERT IMAGE (dashboard)

The WordPress dashboard will give you a quick overview of your site through modules on the white part of the page, links to perform common tasks and to the left, modules in the black section of your site (dashboard, posts, pages, theme, and others). These modules allow you to perform a wide range of actions on your site from choosing a theme to writing pages.

What are the functions of each module?

Dashboard — View recent activity both at your site and in the WordPress ecosystem at large.

-HOME (home page display)

-UPDATES (gives you an easy method to update WordPress, plugins, and themes).

Posts — create and edit published posts, categories, and tags. You will spend most of your administration here, so familiarize yourself with this screen

-ALL POSTS- allows you to edit, delete or view a post

-ADD NEW- this where you add new posts.

-CATEGORIES-Every Post in WordPress is filed under one or more Categories. Categories allow the classification of your Posts into groups and subgroups, thereby aiding viewers in the navigation and use of your site. Each category may be assigned a category parent, so as to set up a hierarchy within the category.

-TAGS- Tags are the keywords you might assign to each post. Not to be confused with Categories, Tags have no hierarchy, meaning there's no relationship from one Tag to another. But like Categories, Tags provide another means to aid your readers in accessing the information on your blog.

Media- Manage your images, videos, and files. (Media is the images, video, recordings, and files, you upload and use in your blog. Media is typically uploaded and inserted into the content when writing a Post or Page-LIBRARY-

The Media Library Screen allows you to edit, delete or view Media previously uploaded to your blog. Multiple Media objects can be selected for deletion. Search and filtering ability is also provided to allow you to find the desired Media.

-ADD NEW MEDIA-The Media Add New Screen allows you to upload new media to later use with posts and pages. A Flash Uploader is provided and the ability to use a Browser Uploader is supplied if the Flash Uploader does not work.

-EDIT MEDIA -The Edit Media page allows you to edit the information (**title, caption, alt text, etc.**) of media files uploaded to your site. This page does not appear as a link in the main Dashboard navigation but is reached by clicking on the Edit link in the **Media Library Screen** that appears when you hover over each item, or when uploading media for the first time on the **Media Add New Screen** once your upload has completed.

Links — create and edit links to display on your site

-ALL LINKS-The All Links Screen allows you to select the Links to edit or delete. Multiple Links can be selected for deletion

-ADD NEW LINK- allows you to add links to your post

-LINK CATEGORIES-Links, like Posts, can be categorized and categorizing Links aids your audience in navigation of your Links. But Link Categories, unlike post Categories, have no hierarchy (parent/child relationship).

Pages — Create and edit pages for your site.

-ALL PAGES-The All Pages Screen provides the necessary tools to edit, delete or view existing Pages. On this screen, you can select the Page to edit, delete or view. Multiple Pages can be selected for deletion and editing. As with Posts, a powerful bulk edit tool allows certain fields to be edited for a whole group of Pages. A handy in-line edit tool, called Quick Edit, allows you to update many fields for an individual Page. Various search and filtering options allow you to find the Pages you want to edit or delete.

- ADD NEW- allows you to create new pages

Comments — Manage reader comments for your blog. Using the Comments panel you can edit and delete comments, and mark them as spam. For more information, see **Managing Comments in WordPres**s. (Comments can be controlled and regulated through the use of filters for language and content, and often can be queued for approval before they are visible on the web site. This is useful in dealing with comment spam.)

Appearance — Change the look of your site. Using the Appearance panel you can customize your site theme, manage widgets, create your site menu, and edit your PHP and CSS files.

-THEMES-A Theme is the overall design of a site and encompasses color, graphics, and text. A Theme is sometimes called a skin. WordPress site-owners have available a long list of Themes to choose from in deciding what to present to their sites' viewers.

-CUSTOMIZE-The Customize Screen displays the settings that can be customized for a specific theme. This option will only be present if the Theme author has configured the theme to allow this capability

-WIDGETS- Widgets are gizmos that allow you to add various pieces of information to your Theme's sidebar content. Widgets, for example, can be used to add Categories, Archives, Blogroll, Recent Posts, and Recent Comments to your sidebar.

-MENUS-The Menus feature allows you to create a **navigation menu** of pages, categories, custom links, tags, etc. that is presented to your visitors. A custom menu WordPress Widget allows the display of a custom menu in the sidebar or other widgetized areas in the Theme. This option will only be present if the Theme author has configured the theme to allow this capability and the site administrator uses them.

-HEADER- the Header feature allows you to manage what image is displayed in a Theme's header. This option will only be present if the Theme author has configured to header to allow this capability.

-BACKGROUND- the Background feature allows you to manage the look and feel of background for your theme. This option will only be present if the Theme author has configured the theme to allow this capability.

-EDITOR- Use the Theme Editor to edit the various files that comprise your Themes. The Appearance Editor Screen allows you to designate which theme you want to edit then displays the files in that theme. Each file (Template and CSS) in the theme can be edited in the large text box.

Plugins — Add and manage features to your WordPress blog that don't come standard with the default installation.

- INSTALLED PLUGINS- the Plugins Installed Screen allows you to view the plugins you've downloaded and choose which plugins you want to activate on your site.

- ADD NEW PLUGINS- the Plugins Add New Screen allows you to add new plugins

- PLUGIN EDITOR- using the Plugins Editor Screen, you can modify the source code of all your plugins.

- **Users** — Manage user accounts for your site.

- ALL USERS- You can manage the accounts of all your site's users at the All Users Screen.

- ADD NEW- You can create new users with the Users Add New Screen.

- YOUR PROFILE- the Users Your Profile Screen allows you to change any information related to your user account.

Tools — Speed up WordPress for your local machine, import content from other sources, export your content, or to upgrade your WordPress software to a new release.

-AVAILABLE TOOLS- the **Press This** function allows quick posting and publishing through the use of a special web browser favorite. You can create a shortcut to allow the use of "Press this" from the new post screen. You then activate the function when browsing by selecting the favorite from your web browser favorites list.

-IMPORT- WordPress supports importing data from a number of external sources. In many cases, posts, comments, pages, categories, tags, and users, can be imported.

-EXPORT- WordPress Export will create an XML file for you to save to your computer. The format, which is called a WordPress eXtended RSS or WXR file, will contain your posts, comments, custom fields, categories, and tags.

Take note that the Exporting feature is a useful method to backup your WordPress data.

Settings — customize how your site behaves, how you interact with your site, and how the rest of the world interacts with your site.

- GENERAL-The **Settings General Screen** is the default Screen in the Settings Administration Screen and controls some of the most basic configuration settings for your site: your site's title and location, who may register an account at your blog, and how dates and times are calculated and displayed.

-WRITING- Using the Settings Writing Screen, you can control the interface with which you write new posts. These settings control the size of the 'post box' in the **Add New Post Screen,** the default **Category**, the default **Link Category**, the default **Post Format**, the **default image sizes**, and the optional **Post via e-mail** feature.

- READING- The settings in the Settings Reading Screen are few in number, but still important. You can decide if you want posts, or a "static" Page, displayed as your blog's front (main) page. You can also adjust how many posts are displayed on that main page. In addition, you can adjust syndication feed features to determine how the information from your site is sent to a reader's web browser or other applications.

-DISCUSSION- the Settings Discussion Screen allows you to control settings concerning incoming and outgoing comments, pingbacks and trackbacks. You can also control from this Screen the circumstances under which your blog sends you emails notifying you about the activities on your site, and you can decide if your blog should show Avatars and their ratings

-MEDIA- the Settings Media Screen allows you to determine how images, documents, and other media files will be organized when uploaded and to specify the maximum dimensions in pixels to use when inserting an image into the body of a post.

- PERMALINKS- the Settings Permalinks Screen controls how that custom URL structure is defined.

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HOW TO SET UP WORDPRESS

I assume you have secured a domain name, secured web hosting, installed WordPress and you now understand the different modules on your dashboard. The next step is to set up your site.

The dashboard you see when you log in to your admin page is the backend of your site, what you do on your admin page influences the look and functionality of your website. The essential steps you need to take to set up your site will be dealt with in this article, this steps may not apply to every website as each individual's needs are different but generally, every owner of a new WordPress site will need to take the following steps to create a functional site.

CHOOSE AND SET UP A THEME

ADD WIDGETS TO YOUR SIDEBAR

SET UP YOUR SETTINGS

UPLOAD AND INSTALL ESSENTIAL PLUGINS

CREATE PAGES

CREATE A MENU

CHOOSE AND SET UP A THEME

A theme is a pre-designed layout and style sheet that provides the framework for the appearance of your WordPress site. A theme can be customized, managed or changed as you wish. There are thousands of free and paid themes on WordPress.

There are two types of themes- free themes and premium themes. Free themes are usually suitable for beginners or users who are just starting out with WordPress. Lots of free themes can be upgraded to premium versions with more functionality and more options to customize your site. Premium themes are themes you must pay for and that you will own. They offer more functionality and customization options than free themes and they have the added advantage of customer support and consistent updates. **ThemeForest** is a market place where you can find top-quality premium themes.

A theme defines the appearance of your site so you must put a lot of thought into the process of choosing a theme for your site. a good theme should be user-friendly, gorgeous, support side-bars, be responsive, widget -ready, SEO-friendly, it must give you the ability to choose any color scheme you want, and it must also have good documentation and support.

HOW TO INSTALL YOUR THEME

>log in to your dashboard

>to your left, click APPEARANCE

INSERT IMAGE

> click THEMES

> You will see themes that are pre-installed on your site

> To add a new theme, click ADD NEW on the top of your page

 INSERT IMAGE

> go through the available themes and choose one that suits your needs

> Or if you already know the name of the theme you are looking for, just search for it.

> For a customized search, click on APPLY FILTERS

INSERT IMAGE

>check tags and press the APPLY FILTERS button

>when you select the theme you want, click INSTALL

>WordPress will install the theme and you simply have to click the ''activate'' link to complete the installation

>then customize your theme as you like

ADD WIDGETS TO YOUR SIDEBAR

 After customizing your theme and having added a sidebar or sidebars as you wish, you will want to add widgets to your sidebar. A widget is a small template block that performs a particular function. For example, top posts widget, search

widget, related posts widget, and others. Widgets are usually found in sidebars and footers.

To add a widget, follow the steps below:

>go to APPEARANCE

> click WIDGETS

> To your right you will see a list of designated widgets you can add to your site and the designated places you can place the widgets.

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> to add a widget, simply drag and drop the widget in any of the designated areas.

SET UP YOUR SETTINGS

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The settings screen is where you will configure everything about how your site works and how you interact with your site and how the visitors to your site will interact with your site.

The settings menu is divided into five sub-menus - GENERAL, WRITING, READING, DISCUSSION, and MEDIA AND PERMALINKS. Customize each of them according to your needs.

SEE MODEL ARTICLE FOR MORE.

UPLOAD AND INSTALL ESSENTIAL PLUGINS

A plugin is a piece of software that can be used to extend the functionality of your WordPress site. A plugin can even be used to modify the role of your website, like the **woocommerce** plugin which can be used to build an e-commerce site for your business.

Most plugins are free while some are paid. For any extra-functionality you require, there is a huge chance a plugin already exists to cater to your needs. Some of the essential plugins you need are:

- UNDER CONSTRUCTION PLUGIN- chances are your website won't be ready on the day you installed the WordPress software. It is advised that you download an under-construction plugin that will provide you with a customizable banner you can place on your homepage until your website is ready to be launched.

- JETPACK PLUGIN- this plugin is full of useful features that help to optimize your site. it is developed by AUTOMATIC a company owned by one of the original creators of WordPress

- ASKIMET PLUGIN- helps you to manage your comments and protect your site from spam.

- YOAST SEO- a must-have. This plugin is an essential SEO (search engine optimization) tool and it is easy to set up and is one the most complete SEO plugins out there.

- SITE BACKUP PLUGIN- your site is always at risk of being hacked or due to an unforeseen occurrence you could lose all your data. You must install a site backup plugin to manage automatic backups for your site. Some popular ones are; **backup buddy, backupwordpress, vaultpress, dropbox for wordpress** and others.

- SITE ANALYTICS- site analytics plugins help you to monitor site data, track the volume of traffic to your site, source of referrals to your site and more. Some common ones; google analytics (gold standard), wp statistics, kissmetrics, and others.

- SECURITY PLUGINS- every online property is at risk or cyber-attacks or whatever form. Some attacks are general attacks while some are targeted. You must do your best to protect your site, no form of protection will guarantee complete safety but it is better to have some form of security. Some of the best security plugins for WordPress are; **ithemes security, all in one wp security, sucuri security and wordfence.**

- CONTACT FORMS- you will need a contact form for your ABOUT page and there are lots of free plugins that are just adequate for your needs. Contact form 7 is one of the most popular and reliable of such plugins. It takes less than a minute to set up and it integrates nicely with other related plugins.

HOW TO INSTALL PLUGINS

You can find WordPress Plugins in the **Administration Screen**s > **Plugins** > **Add New** screen, or directly via the **WordPress Plugins Directory**.

INSERT IMAGE

- Go to **Plugins** > **Add Ne**w.

- Type in the name of the WordPress Plugin or descriptive keyword, author, or tag in **Search Plugins** box or click a tag link below the screen.

- Find the WordPress Plugin you wish to install.

1. Click **Details** for more information about the Plugin and instructions you may wish to print or save to help set up the Plugin.

2. Click **Install Now** to install the WordPress Plugin.

- The resulting installation screen will list the installation as successful or note any problems during the install.

- If successful, click **Activate Plugin** to activate it or **Return to Plugin Installer** for further actions.

CREATE PAGES

Pages are for creating content for your site. For example HOME is a page, it is the front page of your site. Other common pages are ABOUT, ADVERTISE WITH US and CONTACT pages. A page is similar to a post since they are both used to create content but they are also different. Posts are displayed in a chronological order on your blog page while pages are static and can either be accessed through your menu or through a parent page.

Pages can be a single page or contain sub-pages (more on that below). Pages can also use different templates depending on your theme. Common theme templates are full-width (no sidebar) or standard template (with sidebar).

to add a page simply click PAGES, select ADD NEW and start adding content to your page.

A sub-page is a page that is part of a hierarchy of pages. For example, this page is part of the START A WORDPRESS BLOG SERIES which is a group of pages organized under the introductory page.

To create a sub-page:

>First create a new page

> attach it to the parent page

INSERT IMAGE

> Then go to the appropriate parent page and **add a text link** on that parent page to the sub-page

> When you click on the text link it should lead to the sub-page

CREATE A MENU

The menu serves the point of navigation for your site, it allows your users to move between pages and posts. The way you interact with your menu and the way it looks will depend on the type of theme you are using. To create a menu, you must have created pages.

A WordPress theme may support more than one menu- the primary menu and the secondary menu. The primary menu is usually in the header, while the secondary menu can be in the footer or any other place on your site.

HOW TO CREATE A MENU

INSERT IMAGE

WordPress comes with a menu interface that is very easy to use. To create a menu, go to APPEARANCE, then select MENU.

>First you provide a name for your menu

>then to your left, you will see a list of pages, custom links, and categories.

>to add a page, just tick the box and click ADD TO MENU

>after adding pages to the menu, you can adjust the order of the pages by dragging and dropping each page to where you want it to be

> Then select the appropriate location for the menu

INSERT IMAGE

>click SAVE MENU

>visit your website to see what you have done

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HOW TO WRITE A BLOG POST ON WORDPRESS

The life of a blog is its blog posts and the process of creating blog posts in WordPress is quite simple and straight forward.

To create a post, go to POSTS, click ADD NEW and this will open the posts page. The content area of the post is divided into VISUAL AND TEXT editor. The VISUAL editor is beginner-friendly and familiar. The text editor allows you to see the HTML of your content and is suitable for advanced users.

INSERT IMAGE

If are not interested in using WordPress to write your blog posts, then you can use any word processing software of your choice- Microsoft word or google docs. I use Microsoft Word, I write my posts and edit the grammar and spelling mistakes on Microsoft word, and then I copy the content to NOTEPAD. After that, I copy and paste the content from notepad to the posts page on WordPress and complete other necessary edits.

NOTE: I copy my content to NOTEPAD before uploading it because that will remove all the HTML content from the article.

To add images and other media to your post, click the ADD MEDIA button at the top of the content area. Click on select files to upload images and other media.

Then click on INSERT INTO PAGE/POST to add the image. (Make sure you place your cursor on the spot you want to insert the image or other media).

To add links to your blog post:

1 From the WordPress post or page editor, select the text that you want to be hyperlinked.

2. Once you have that text selected, click the hyperlink button in the toolbar.

3. This will bring up a box where you can enter the URL of your hyperlink and in the LINK TEXT FIELD, you will add the text to be linked. You can also click this checkbox to open the link in a new tab. (it is recommended you use this option if you are linking to an external site)

4. If you'd rather link to existing content on your website, just click to expand this section. Now you'll see a search bar to search your site and a list of existing posts or pages. Clicking on one of the items on the list will change the hyperlink URL above.

5. Once you have your hyperlink URL ready to go, click the Add Link button. Now your selected text will have a link.

To add categories, tags and a featured image to your post, go to the bottom right of the POSTS page and it's pretty clear from there.

INSERT IMAGE

HOW CAN I PUBLISH MY POST

INSERT IMAGE

To publish your post, go the box similar to the one in the image above, it is where you manage all your publishing options. you can save your post as a draft, you can set the time the post will be published, you can preview how the post will look like on your site and you can publish the post immediately.

SEE ProBlogger ARTICLE FOR HOW TO WRITE A GREAT BLOG POST

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ESSENTIAL TOOLS EVERY BLOGGER WILL NEED

This list contains lots of tools I use to run my blog and you will find them to be invaluable. They make the whole process of creating content, finding and editing images, promoting content and even the research process easy.

BLOGGING PLATFORMS:

WORDPRESS- I use WordPress and so do millions of people simply because it is the best blogging platform out there. It is easy to use, maintain and customize and it as a large community of developers who contribute to its development and produce plugins to improve its functionality.

BLOGGER- a free blogger platform owned and maintained by Google. Blogger will cater to the needs of someone who wants a simple website to be used primarily as a blog.

NOTE TAKING APPS**:**

EVERNOTE: you can jot down ideas as they come, clip web pages, sync your notes to your other devices and more.

ONENOTE: this Microsoft software offers all the functionality of Evernote along with integration with the rest of the office suite.

WORDPROCESSORS:

MICROSOFT WORD OR GOOGLE DOCS: if you prefer to write your articles on a word processor instead of writing your posts on WordPress, then you need a word processor.

IMAGES

Images optimize your content and they aid the SEO ranking of your blog post. Also, blog posts with attractive and relevant images get more clicks on RSS feeds and social media news streams.

GOOGLE ADVANCED IMAGE SEARCH-you can find almost anything on google, images are not an exception.

FLICKR- a reliable image resource. Images on flicker can be free or you may be required to pay for them. Also, there are some images that you cannot use for your blog post because they are not licensed for commercial use. So make sure you know what you are doing.

ISTOCK: free images

FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS- images under creative commons can be used for free but with certain restrictions. Whether you can use the image for your blog post or note depends on the type of license attributed to the image. Images with an attribution-sharelike license can be used for your blog post

GETTY IMAGES- top-notch images but you must pay for them.

IMAGE EDITING TOOLS:

CANVA- canva makes the whole process of editing and re-sizing your image simple and straight forward.

MICROSOFT PAINT- a Microsoft alternative to canva.

JING- it allows you to easily take screenshot images

MICROSOFT SNIPPING TOOL- it also allows you to take screenshot images.

GOOGLE TOOLS:

The success of your blog depends on how well it ranks on google. However, Google is more than the search engine overlord all bloggers must bow to. It also provides a wide array of free tools that every blogger will find extremely useful.

GOOGLE TRENDS- it allows you to see what's trending on google, it also allows you to search for the most popular search queries in real-time. Google trends can be used to evaluate the level of interest in a topic.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS- a vital tool for any type of website. It tracks your web traffic, highest converting pages, where visitors to your site are coming from and much more.

GOOGLE ALERTS- I personally use this tool to get alerts for articles on topics that are related to small businesses. It is useful and it helps you to stay in touch.

GOOGLE ADWORDS KEYWORD PLANNER- this tool was designed for advertisers but you can also find it useful. It helps you to identify the keywords that people are using to search for your topic.

EMAIL MARKETING:

MAIL CHIMP- it is free for up to 2000 subscribers. It provides the ability to create newsletters, sync your RSS feed to your email updates and more.

AWEBER- offers all the functionality of mail chimp but you must pay for it. it offers more features than MailChimp

OPTIN MONSTER: another email/newsletter management tool

CONSTANTCONTACT: a very popular choice for small business owners

JETPACK: jetpack is free and among the tons of functionality it adds to your site, it also allows you to send email updates to your readers. The catch is that you have no control over your email list and you cannot copy your email list to your email provider (Aweber, MailChimp and others)

OTHERS**:**

SEM RUSH- it helps you to evaluate the level of interest in a topic. It offers similar features to Google AdWords keyword planner.

HUBSPOT TOPIC GENERATOR- a free tool that generates topics for any subject

LASTPASS- a password management tool. The basic plan of lastpass is free, but if you want more functionality like syncing your passwords then you have to upgrade to a paid plan. It stores your passwords in an encrypted vault and generates them when you need them to log in to a website. You can also store sensitive information on encrypted notes.

FEEDLY- an RSS news aggregator I use, it aggregates the latest articles from websites of your choice.

DROPBOX- backup your files with dropbox. There free plans and premium plans.

BUZZSUMO- it helps you to gauge the level of interest in a topic, especially how often it is shared on social media.

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HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR NEW BLOG

The amount of traffic you attract to your blog will be determined by the quality of your content and how effectively you promote your blog. You have created valuable and actionable content and now you want to attract readers to your blog, some strategies you can use are:

1. LAUNCH YOU BLOG WITH A SERIES OF POSTS ON A MAJOR TOPIC IN YOUR NICHE- some people prefer to start small, set up WordPress, write an introductory

post and launch your site. No one wants to visit an empty site and google will not rank an empty site. Identify a major topic in your niche and write some articles on it, launch with those articles, promote the hell out them and build from there.

2. SEO OPTIMIZATION- it is important you have a grasp of what this means and its importance to the success of your blog, so I think its better you conduct your own research on SEO optimization. Innovative use of permalinks and the Yoast SEO plugin will go a long way to aid the search engine optimization of your site

3. INTRA-SITE LINKS- if you have noticed, this site is filled with intra-site links. It's because they aid navigation and also because Google takes them into consideration when ranking your site. Try to consistently produce quality content and link them to related blog posts on your site.

4. GUEST POSTING- you can guest post on larger sites and establish yourself as an authority on a subject.

5. COMMENT ON OTHER SITES- comment on blogs in your niche that already have an established base of readers and build a relationship with other readers. You use this to attract them by placing links in your comment but avoid spamming.

6. PAID ADVERTISING OPTIONS- you can use search engine advertising or social media advertising to attract visitors to your site. Make sure you know what you are doing to avoid a waste of money.

7. BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST- you should start building your email list as soon as you have a significant number of readers. Email alerts in the inbox of your readers that consistently provides valuable and useful content will ensure those readers remain loyal readers.

8. SHARE YOUR POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA- share your posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media platforms

9. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOUGHT LEADERS IN YOUR NICHE- you can build relationships with experts in your niche by making useful comments on their blog posts, following them on social media and linking to their site in your blog posts. They will reply in kind and could recommend your blog to their readers.

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7 WAYS TO MONETIZE YOUR BLOG

 The goal of most bloggers unless you simply blog for fun is to eventually monetize their blog. Below are some common strategies that you can use to monetize your blog:

Affiliate marketing-it allows you to generate income by promoting other people's products for a small commission. You can apply for affiliate programs, create a page or write blog posts on products aimed at an audience interested in those products and generate revenues as customers visit the website of the seller and purchase products. Visit affiliate networks that connect publishers like you with merchants who want to market their products

Google AdSense- once you have created some posts on your blog, you can apply for google *AdSense*. It allows publishers to generate income from advertisers who place *ads* on the GOOGLE NETWORK. Once you sign up and get approved, you will be able to customize ad slots for links, banners, images, and video and place

google AdSense code for each of those ad slots unto your website. After an hour or two, Google will begin to match the best ads to your website.

Selling ads-you can start selling ads directly to advertisers as soon as you wish.

You can manually manage ads on your site or you can use platforms like *buysellads that* can help you sell and manage ads through their platform.

This strategy can be lucrative and it as the potential to generate growing revenue provided you continue to generate increasing traffic to your blog. Also periodically update metrics on your ADVERTISE page, so you can increase your pricing as your audience grows.

Syndicating content- examples; 'around the web', 'sponsored posts', this are created by code from content syndication networks, many of which want you to have a large base of traffic before you are considered a publisher to their networks. By including related content to your blog, you will earn money anytime a user clicks on an article.

SPONSORED REVIEWS- you can monetize your blog through paid reviews of apps, e-books, software, tools, and other digital content. To do this, you must have a relationship of trust with your readers and you must have a loyal and dedicated audience.

SELLING YOUR OWN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: you can sell your e-books, your services, and the products you sell in your business to your readers.

PAID SUBSCRIPTION: if you are convinced you can produce quality content that people will be willing to pay for, then you can use paywalls to gate premium content that people must pay for before they can read. Businessday Nigeria, Harvard Business Review, and the NewYorkTimes all use this strategy. You must know this strategy could turn away loyal readers and new visitors if the content is perceived as not worth paying for.